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United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON
GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS
SUBCOMMITTEE ON REORGANIZATION AND
INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS
(PURSUANT TO S. RES. 42, 86TH CONGRESS)

March 6, 1959

Professor J. Lederberg
Department of Genetics
Stanford University
Stanford, California

Dear Prof. Lederberg:

I am writing to convey a most cordial invitation to you to favor this Subcommittee of the United States Senate with your personal judgement in answer to this very important question:

"What specific steps should be taken to strengthen medical research throughout the world? That is, how best can we speed international cooperation in bio-chemical research toward the conquest of the principal killing and crippling diseases, like cancer, cardio-vascular ailments and other major universal maladies?"

As you may know, the U. S. Senate has authorized a special International Health Study by this Subcommittee for the purpose of analyzing what the United States Government IS DOING and SHOULD DO to improve world research against disease and disability.

In our review, we naturally, would rely very heavily upon the expert judgement of leading scientists, such as yourself. We deeply respect outstanding contributions which you have made, as symbolized by the honor of your Nobel Award.

By way of background, let me mention:

a. Our study has already brought us in close contact with most of the leading scientific organizations, as such -- the World Medical Association, the International Council of Scientific Unions, the World Health Organization, and other groups whom you might recommend.

b. The Senate is now taking up Senate Joint Resolution 41, proposed by Senator Hill. This very worthy Bill would establish a U. S. National Institute of International Medical Research. It would receive 50 million dollars annual authorization, so as to aid notable research projects abroad, support international symposia, translate, abstract and disseminate more medical information, etc.

c. We have already found that the consensus among leading researchers of many nations COMMENDS such approaches as increased exchange-visitor programs, etc. (as the Hill Bill itself contemplates).

d. The National Institutes of Health in Bethesda, Maryland, already aid overseas work of the above types in an amount of \$3.6 million per year, as indicated in the enclosed Committee Print, on page 98.

Now you can aid us by suggesting any NEW APPROACHES which you feel meritorious. We would welcome SPECIFIC ILLUSTRATIONS on ways of meeting challenging problems of basic or applied research, in physiology, chemistry or medicine.

We would be glad, too, to receive any comments which you may have on STRENGTHS OR WEAKNESSES of U. S. Government medical-biological research programs.

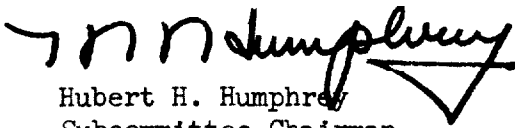
We ask, too, what is your judgement on the MAJOR OBSTACLES to co-operation among scientists of all nationalities, and how may these obstacles be removed?

I can appreciate how busy you are, but I would be most grateful if we could hear from you and if we might have your permission to publish extracts of your comments.

If, however, you offer any suggestions or observations which you prefer NOT to have us refer to publicly, please do not hesitate to advise us.

Looking forward to getting your esteemed views and with all good wishes, I am

Sincerely,


Hubert H. Humphrey
Subcommittee Chairman

HHH/c

Encl: "International Medical Research"